

Square dancing to Black Lights called by Homer Garrett. Ace Smith also presented a Black Lighted Square an evening earlier and all these squares were very well presented and enjoyable to watch. There were many more presentations. Naturally, each one tried to do their best at this annual affair and nearly all succeeded. The whole affair was a credit to the Californian Federation. The spirit of joy friendly brotherhood emanated from every face. May this spirit live for ever and through it eliminate the need of wars and atom bombs.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: 1) Bornean Harvest Dance performed beautifully by Madelyne Greene's troupe. 2) Grace San Filipino's troupe performing a very vivacious Ukrainian Hutzul dance. 3) Three "Brides' Maids" dance with gifts for the bride in a very folkish Hungarian wedding scene presented by Bakersfield Circle Eight. 4) The Kolomaniaacs of John Filcich, San Francisco in the lively Primorsko Kolo. (Foto by Art Noble).



STOKES FOREST
Summer Dance Institute
American Squares Magazine
and
New Jersey Dept. of Education
again co-sponsor
August 28 - September 6, 1954
Vyts Beliajus — Shirley Durham
Rickey Holden — Harold Harton
Olga Kulbitsky — Frank Kaltman
write
American Squares
1159 Broad St. Newark 5, N. J.

THE DANCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

"The Dance in Washington," two performances bringing together outstanding local dance talent, was presented on May 21 and 22, at Cardozo Center Auditorium, 13th and Clifton Streets, N.W. Sponsored by the D.C. Recreation Department, the program was the first of its kind in Washington, combining the many different dance interests in the city. Leading representatives of folk dancing, American square dancing, ballet, modern dancing, and ballroom dancing presented a different program of entertainment each evening at 8:15 P.M.

First phase of the dance covered was the traditional folk dance, as kept alive by the many nationality groups residing in the nation's capital. Dances of Scotland, Greece, Latvia, the Ukraine, and Armenia was highlighted.

The American square dance part of the program has been arranged by the National Capital Area Square Dance Leaders Association. From its membership have been chosen the most popular and highly-skilled callers, whose groups demonstrated regional styles of country in the United States, including the precise contras of New England, fast-moving, powerful western square dances, and graceful old-time couple dances. Charles Kinser, President, and Haviland Hobbs, Program Chairman for NCASDLA, planned the square dance presentation.

Ballet was ably represented by two well-known Washington studios. The National Ballet, famous for its Cherry Blossom Festival performances, contributed ballet selections each night, under the direction of Leon Fokine.

Performing "Schubertiana" was by the Washington Ballet, under the direction of Lisa Gardiner and Mary Day.

The modern dance portion was sponsored by the Modern Dance Council of Washington, which has elected three outstanding local artists to represent the field. Erika Thimey and her Chamber Dance Group, Ethel Butler and Company, and Pola Nirenska and her Studio Workshop performed selections chosen by the Council as the best in modern dance.

Ballroom dancing was in the capable hands of the Arthur Murray Dance Studios on one evening, featuring a Cavalcade of Dancing. The history of ballroom dancing, from the Gay 90's, through the Charleston, Black Bottom, and Shag to present-day jitterbug, was their theme. Top talent among the professional ballroom dance teachers of the nation's capital was featured on the other evening's program, in an exhibition of rumba, mambo, samba, and jitterbug.

"The Dance in Washington" was one of the many events of the month-long Washington Festival of Arts and Interests, sponsored by the D.C. Recreation Department to focus attention on the wealth and variety of cultural activities carried on in the nation's capital.

Chairman of the Dance Committee for the Washington Festival of Arts and Interests is Dave Rosenberg, Folk Dance Director for the D.C. Recreation Department. Mr. Rosenberg, a recognized authority on ethnic folk arts, is Director of the annual Washington Folk Festival. His many contributions to the dance field have resulted in a growth in popularity of dancing as an adult recreation in the nation's capital. D. R.



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RATIONALIZATIONS OF THE "NEW DANCES"

By Arthur Katona, Ph. D.

The "new dance", along with its ever-erupting rash of cheap and gaudy square and round dance concoctions, has ushered in a host of rationalizations. Psychologists tell us that rationalizations are reasons given, other than the real reasons, to justify behavior. In other words, rationalizations are phony excuses. Sometimes, say psychologists, we are not aware of the phoniness of our excuses, that is, rationalization may be unconscious—which simply means that we kid ourselves at times.

Since promoters of all kinds, from square dance callers to record companies, are cashing in on the present fads, many of the rationalizations are outright examples of the cynical adage that money talks. The "new dance", in keeping with its shoddy output of dance figures, has produced an equally shoddy "new ethics." Vyts Beliajus has well stated the matter when he pointed out in regard to the current fads, "... they have no depth, no feeling, no spirit and no sociability. They are cold, aimless and anti-social." (See his magnificent article, "The Dance Situation in the U.S.," in Viltis for January-February, 1954.)

What are the leading rationalizations? What do the attempts to justify the "cold, aimless and anti-social" nature of the "new dance" look like? Let us see how they stand up under examination.

1. Mixers are now out of place; they're too much extra work for the caller.

(Anyone knows that mixers are relaxing to both leader and dancers, to say nothing of their hearty sociability.)

2. An exclusive square dance set really practices good fellowship since it has fellowship within it among its own members.

(By the same token a selfish person practices good fellowship with himself. A rationalizer can call black, white!)

3. Dancers don't need to mix to be sociable; they can get acquainted during intermission or at refreshment time.

(A dance is not a dinner or cocktail party. Sociability at a dance means sharing dances just as at a dinner or cocktail party it means sharing food or drink.)

4. The "new dance" is fun.

(An observer, amazed at the hectic antics of a group of "new dance" addicts, commented caustically, "If this mania is fun, so is the delirium of a feverish patient.")

5. A good new dance must start somewhere for dancing should progress; so let more and more dances be invented.

(Dance creation, we hope, will always be with us, but genuine creativity is not mania, nor is it assembly-line production, nor is it out to get publicity or to make a fast buck. A dance creation is a work of art, expressive of the spirit of its creator; it is not a quick, slipshod hodgepodge, nor is it a commercial stunt.)

6. If a person has enough dance experience, the new style calls are as simple as "Birdie in a Cage."

((Sure, even a rat in time will learn to run through a maze. But are we going to let promoters pressure us into becoming well trained rat-racers?))

7. One should stay with his partner or in his set for protection against rough dancers.

(If a dance is rough, there is no protection staying with a partner or in a set. One will get jostled, kicked, stepped on, pushed around by others in the general rough-house. The best protection here is to go home. But—irony of ironies— it is in the exclusive clubs, where all are supposed to be friends and skilled dancers, where the most extreme isolation is practiced. In some clubs dancers stay in their private sets, dance on the same spot on the floor, and do not have a single mixer all evening long.)

8. We don't want mixers because we don't want to get

stuck with some "dope" all night.

(No mixer lasts all night, but only a few minutes. One changes partners continually in a mixer.)

9. A caller or instructor has to make a living; so he's cashing in on the "new dance."

(Callers and instructors will make much more money in the long run by serving the needs of the general public, not by catering to elite groups of faddists. Only a tiny percentage of the American public goes in for square, round, or folk dancing. Callers and instructors would greatly enlarge that percentage by making the dance a simple, sociable, enjoyable activity for the many.)

10. The good in the "new dance" will survive; the bad will die out.

(A study of history shows that this is not necessarily true. In times past, arts, folk and otherwise, have been smothered. Arts may degenerate and decay, as whole civilization have done. As in the economic field, where Gresham's Law operates (bad money drives out good money), so in the cultural field, the bad may drive out the good. In the "new dance", for instance, while the shoddy may go fast, it is constantly being replaced by the new shoddy, and the solid traditional dances are elbowed out of the way. Apropos of this, Pappy Shaw has warned that the current fads may kill our dance movement.)

The above rationalizations just about speak for themselves, exposing the pretentious nature of the "new dance." Beyond this essential tawdriness—and much worse—are the antisocial results. Faddism, egoism, cliquishness, exhibitionism, prejudice, snobbery, and crude commercialism crop up. The traditional fellowship circle gives way to the market place where tinsel goods are ballyhooed, displayed, and sold.

The dance should be a joyous, friendly, shared activity, the social recreation of the people. It is, in Beliajus's fine words, "informal, it is pleasurable, it means mixing and dancing with other and it means being a part of a group." Let us keep it that way.

ATEITIS CONCERT

Once again the ATEITIS folk dancers presented a successful annual concert on April 24 at Chicago's Lithuanian Auditorium. This year's concert was unusual, it was like a minor folk festival, as other groups likewise were present. First seen among Lithuanians were American Indian dances presented by the Tatanka (Black Bear) group who danced six numbers. The Polish Festival dancers of Emely Mucha danced two numbers and a male quartet sang a group of Lithuanian folk songs. The Ateitis members themselves demonstrated twelve dances.



Rugučiai as performed by the Chicago Lithuanian group ATEITIS. This troupe was very much in demand during these past months appearing for many affairs sponsored by Chicago organizations as well as over television for the United Palsy fund raising.